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My name is Laura A. Macaluso, and I am an art and cultural heritage consultant currently working for the Department of Cultural Affairs in New Haven and for the Norwalk Historical Society. I live between these two great Connecticut cities and travel weekly to each job site either by I-95, the Merritt or Metro-North. I am a graduate of Southern Connecticut State University and am here to tell you that by eliminating state support for the arts, specifically here Connecticut's Art in Public Spaces Program, you eliminate a job-generating, tourism generating entity that is a positive contributor to the economic and cultural health of our state.

One of my current projects is to document and place online the City of New Haven's public art collection, of which more than thirty works of art were produced under the City's own Percent for Art legislation. I could stand here and tell you why this art – and the State of Connecticut's Percent for Art works – are so important in creating livable, healthy, and attractive cities. The preservation of history and heritage, of cultural ideas and identity, the development of community and the educational uses of public art are just some of the outcomes of the design, creation and installation of public art. These are very nice products, invaluable even, and worthy of your consideration.

But, right now, when we are all struggling to hold on to jobs and move the economy forward, while at the same time lessen the huge budget deficit, can we rightfully argue for the continuation of a state-funded art program? According to the Public Art Network of Americans for the Arts, ten jobs are supported by every public artwork commissioned. These include artists, designers, architects, engineers, fabricators, material suppliers, installers, and various

types of assistants, to name a few. Public artworks require transportation, site preparation, lighting, landscaping, insurance, and a host of services from small businesses. The creation and installation of a public artwork is a dynamic contributor to small business development. Notable among the beneficiaries are the creative industries made up of talented workers who are self-employed artists and free-lancers or free-lancers employed by micro-enterprises.

Thus the potential elimination of our state's Percent for Art program undermines my work and the work of my colleagues in the arts, tourism, marketing and education fields, and should speak to everyone interested in shaping an economically sustainable and healthy state. Thank you for listening and for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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## **A Case for Public Art in Connecticut**

### **CONNECTICUT'S ART IN PUBLIC SPACES PROGRAM**

Administered, by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, the Art in Public Spaces Program Connecticut's Art in Public Spaces program was established by the General Assembly in 1978, the Art in Public Spaces program requires that not less than 1% of the cost of construction or renovation of publicly accessible state buildings be allocated for the commission or purchase of artwork for that building. Over 300 works have been commissioned since the program's inception. The works represent a wide variety of media, including sculpture, wall relief, environmental installation, painting, and photography; and range in scale from works on paper to monumental murals.

The purpose of the Art in Public Spaces program is to provide the citizens of Connecticut with an improved public environment by investing in creative works of high quality for public buildings. The program adds visibility to the cultural heritage of the state and its people. **To date, the Connecticut program has resulted in 318 projects created by 199 artists in 61 towns.** To see the towns and projects, visit

<http://www.cultureandtourism.org/cct/cwp/view.asp?a=2214&q=274520>

**The Art in Public Spaces program has employed 90 Connecticut artists.** In addition to employing artists, the commissioned artist frequently contract additional employees hiring fabricators, studio assistants, structural engineers, electricians, architects, installers etc. Artists who receive commissions purchase project materials from Connecticut businesses. They buy paint, granite, glass, stone, steel, light fixtures and more.

### **WHAT IS PUBLIC ART?**

Public art is more than just art installed in public spaces. Public art, at its best, is a mirror that reflects local environments, cultural values, and the artistic vitality of the community in which it is placed. Integrated into the design and construction of either exterior or interior projects, or created as a stand-alone objects, public art is planned and developed in response to a particular context or place and is site-specific – created for the specific conditions of the place in which it resides. Public art makes sense of communities by creating landmarks, directional elements, and defining neighborhoods and districts. Public art's "placemaking" builds livable communities and contributes to the distinctiveness of a place.

### **BENEFITS OF PUBLIC ART**

Public art:

- **Creates jobs and stimulates business activity.** Public art brings substantial economic benefits. According to the Public Art Network of Americans for the Arts, ten (10) jobs are supported by every public artwork commissioned. These include artists, designers, architects, engineers, fabricators, material suppliers, installers, and various types of assistants, to name a few. Public artworks require transportation, site preparation, lighting, landscaping, insurance, and a host of services from small businesses. The

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The maintenance and restoration of installed artworks provides an additional economic stimulus, generating business for suppliers, conservators, fabricators, artists, and others.

**Boosts cultural tourism.** A *Public Art Network Issue Paper* published in 2004 by Americans for the Arts (AFTA) points out that “Many cities, counties, and regions have, over the years, acquired large collections of artworks in the public realm. These form part of the cultural assets that attract visitors to the region, making a significant contribution to the local economy. A diverse range of artwork in the collection by artists of regional, national, and international stature is important to establish a noteworthy collection that will serve as cultural destinations.”

- **Attracts and retains creative people.** According to the Public Art Network of AFTA, colleges and universities report that public artwork has a positive influence on student morale, stimulates creativity and innovation, and contributes to student learning. Public artwork attracts creative individuals and helps recruiting efforts on college campuses. The presence of art work communicates a sense of pride and a college or university’s competitive edge and helps attract and retain a creative and high-quality student body
- **Enhances our public buildings and improves the quality of life for our citizens.** Artwork brings public spaces to life. It improves the visual quality and appearance of public environments and buildings and contributes to the prestige of a community. Public artwork makes government buildings and public university campuses attractive places to work, live, and visit.
- **Defines the identity of a place and reveals the distinct character of a community.** Works of public art are symbols of the creative energy and artistic vision of a place. They express the soul of a community. Public art tells a community’s story and reminds residents and visitors of what makes a place special. A community with public works of art has invested in its identity and cultural heritage.
- **Engages broad segments of a community in the acquisition of artwork.** The planning, selection, and commissioning of artwork is a broad-based collaborative process that brings together facility planners, site-based administrators, artists, architects, engineers, arts professionals, and civic and community representatives. The process fosters relationships, resolves problems, and builds consensus.
- **Is engaging and accessible to all.** Public art is for all to experience and enjoy. It delights. It captivates. It brings us into a state of focused attention. It can inspire awe and bring out deep emotion and satisfaction. Public art opens new ways of seeing and understanding the world. Public works of art stimulate the appreciation of art by Connecticut citizens.
- **Contributes to the sustainability of the built environment.** Public art, in addition to

being aesthetically pleasing, can have a functional purpose. When fully integrated into the site, it can incorporate sustainable features that contribute to energy conservation, water drainage, and solar conduction.

## **BRIEF PERCENT-FOR-ART HISTORY**

The percent-for-art concept dates back to the New Deal and the U.S. Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture established in 1934. The program set aside approximately 1 percent of the cost of federal building for "artistic adornment." In addition to securing high-quality art for public buildings, the Section was committed to stimulating a "democratic" appreciation of art by the American people.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Works Progress Administration (changed to Works Project Administration in 1939) to employ artists and utilize their talent and skills to enhance the built environment for the benefit of the public, the economy, and artists themselves. Today twenty-seven states and over 300 municipalities legislatively allocate some portion of building costs for art acquisition.